

**MARICOPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTE BOOK**

**INFORMAL SESSION  
May 13, 2002**

The Board of Supervisors of Maricopa County, Arizona convened at 9:00 a.m., May 13, 2002, in the Board of Supervisors' Conference Room, Tenth Floor, 301 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, Arizona, with the following members present: Don Stapley, Chairman; Fulton Brock, Vice Chairman; Andy Kunasek, Max W. Wilson, Mary Rose Wilcox, Fran McCarroll, Clerk of the Board; and Alma Hernandez, Administrative Coordinator. Also present: David Smith, County Administrative Officer; and Paul Golab, Deputy County Attorney.

**PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION: RESULTS INITIATIVE REQUESTS – OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET**

Item: Presentation and discussion regarding additional Results Initiative Requests (RIRs) that have been submitted by departments for funding in the FY 2002-2003 budget. (C4902041801) (ADM1825)

Sandi Wilson, Deputy County Administrator, introduced two Results Initiative Requests (RIRs) items not previously presented to the Board:

- Operational costs for the San Tan Mountain Regional Park, and
- Spanish-speaking Internship Program for the Adult Probation Department.

**OPERATIONAL COSTS FOR THE SAN TAN MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK**

Bill VanAusdal, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation Department, informed the Board that Maricopa County has owned the San Tan Mountain Regional Park land for 14 years. Five or six years ago, the surrounding communities (which include Queen Creek, Chandler, Gilbert and Mesa) requested additional management of the park that resulted in the employment of one park supervisor who monitors trash, writes citations and patrols the area. These same communities have partnered with Maricopa County to provide funds for a master plan revision. Funding is now requested to operate San Tan Mountain Regional Park similarly as the other functioning parks within the county. Funding would help retain the current employee and add new positions (interpretive ranger, clerk, park maintenance worker and a trails crew), provide vehicles for the staff and a temporary building for office space. Funds would also be used to develop legitimate trails to help reduce damage to the natural resources from trespassers and prevent the creation of unauthorized trails.

Supervisor Wilcox asked where was the entrance to the park and whether there are any buildings on site. Mr. VanAusdal explained that from Hunt Highway, turn south onto Thompson Road, and then travel about 2 miles to Phillips Road, which ends at the park boundary. Previously, there had been a barricade at the end of the road, but it has been removed, which leads to unauthorized vehicles trespassing into the park. There are currently no buildings on site; however, this proposal includes a request for a portable office facility for staff that would be located near the terminus of Phillips Road.

Supervisor Wilcox asked, aside from the temporary building, how much infrastructure is needed. Mr. VanAusdal responded that the majority of the development would be trail infrastructure since there currently are no designated trails in existence. With a trail crew, about two miles of trails can be built per year.

Supervisor Brock mentioned that on a recent visit to the San Tan Mountains, he noticed a group of individuals vandalizing the park by removing rocks and cacti and asked how this type of activity can be reported. Mr. VanAusdal agreed that this has been a problem, particularly during the weekend, and that the Pinal and Maricopa County Sheriff's offices will respond, however, the vandals are usually gone by the time

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they arrive. But it is difficult to patrol the Park system because of its sheer size of 10,000 acres. The Parks Department is hesitant to involve volunteers in patrolling the parks to confront vandals, but encourages their participation as “eyes and ears.” The Parks Department has also attempted to secure corporate sponsorship for the “Park Watch” program modeled after the “Block Watch” program in neighborhoods. Unlawful activity could be reported by paging a park ranger. Geography and staffing pose problems if, for example, only one park ranger is available and located at another park at the opposite end of the county.

Supervisor Kunasek stated that approximately two years ago, Supervisor Brock and he discussed the idea to fund infrastructure improvements for the San Tan Mountain Park by the sale of excess parcels. His broad estimate of the amount that could possibly be generated at public auction was \$15 to \$30 million. Supervisor Kunasek also suggested that Pinal County should ultimately acquire ownership and management of the park, rather than Maricopa County spending general fund dollars for a park in another county. Proceeds from the sale of excess parcels could possibly generate enough funds not only to improve San Tan Mountain Park, but also enough for the other recreational needs in the southeast valley region. Supervisor Kunasek felt that funding small amounts to the regional park is simply a “band-aid” that would not result in a completed park, and does not address the fairness of asking Maricopa County taxpayers to spend general fund dollars when the budget is already overburdened.

Chairman Stapley concurred that Pinal County should be involved and that he has been in dialogue with Sandy Smith, the Pinal County supervisor in whose district the San Tan Mountain Park is located. He stated that, based on agreement signed 14 years ago, Maricopa County agreed to assume responsibility of opening and maintaining the park.

Supervisor Wilson asked for clarification about how much of the park is located in Pinal County, to which Chairman Stapley responded that all of it is in Pinal County, however, it is within close proximity to Maricopa County border and the residents of Queen Creek, Gilbert and Mesa. Chairman Stapley continued, explaining that most of the people that use the park are Maricopa County residents, and that as Pinal County grows, they should participate more in the operation of the park.

Supervisor Wilson asked whether an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with Pinal County regarding the San Tan Mountain Park had been adopted. Mr. VanAusdal responded that there is an IGA between Maricopa County, Chandler, Gilbert, Queen Creek and Mesa for the original Master Plan, and there had been an IGA with Pinal County relating to road construction, which has been completed.

Supervisor Wilson commented that, at this point in the budget process, when funds are appropriated for one project, they are actually taken from another. If excess parcels were sold, proceeds could be used in a number of different ways within Maricopa County. He inquired whether there were any means by which the park would generate income such as the customary fee charged at other parks. Mr. VanAusdal stated affirmatively that projected annual revenues of \$15,000 are anticipated based on park fee of \$1 per person by foot, horse, or bicycle, but no vehicular access.

Supervisor Wilson recommended that if excess parcels were to be sold, proceeds could be placed in a trust then used for park operational costs. He also commented that spending \$500,000 to generate \$15,000 annually did not appear to be a good plan. Supervisor Wilson stated that he is a supporter of the parks system since he utilizes them often, but felt that the Board must remain cognizant of other priorities.

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Chairman Stapley responded that he expects revenues to increase rapidly once the park opens because of the tremendous increase in the East Valley population. He suggested that perhaps a different fee could be charged to Pinal County residents to help defray operational costs.

Supervisor Wilcox recalled the 1993 discussions regarding the land purchase from the Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC), which included portions of the San Tan Mountain Park and some excess parcels adjacent to the main park lands. She believed there was a caveat in the agreement that stated any proceeds from the sale of these parcels would remain within the park system. Supervisor Wilcox recommended that the agreement should be reviewed prior to the sale of any parcels.

Supervisor Brock requested clarification from the Parks Department regarding park boundaries and the issue of fencing to define public land versus private land, stating that some citations that come before Justice Courts cannot be adjudicated for lack of clearly defining public park land. Mr. VanAusdal conceded that boundaries are difficult to determine, particularly at San Tan Mountain Park, because the lines are convoluted. A fencing program has begun at San Tan, but construction is difficult given this terrain. Another issue for the fencing program is the Pygmy Owl habitat, which allows construction during only six months of the year, and an annual habitat survey is required during the remaining six months. In response to Supervisor Brock's question of when the last time a Pygmy Owl was spotted, Mr. VanAusdal answered that one has never been spotted in the San Tan Mountains, and the last siting in Maricopa County was in 1976. This, however, does not excuse the survey requirement by the federal Fish and Wildlife Service, and the fact that Pygmy Owls do inhabit Pima County and are suspected to migrate north.

Supervisor Brock noted that in his previous discussions with Parks and Recreation Director Bill Scalzo, it was estimated that 15% of the park was fenced and approximately 85% remained unfenced. Supervisor Brock questioned whether the fencing issue would be addressed adequately in order to protect the park from vandalism. Mr. VanAusdal agreed that this is a fair assessment of what remains to be fenced. The budget presented on this day provides no money for fencing, however, fences are built as funds become available.

Chairman Stapley commented that he personally wished to express his appreciation to the Parks staff who assisted him during a recent visit to Utery Mountain Park when his family dog, Rex, overheated during the hike and became ill. This experience reaffirmed his belief about the quality of the Parks staff and the importance of protecting the parks from vandalism and misuse. Chairman Stapley conceded that this is a difficult budget year, however, he stated that operating the San Tan Mountain as a regional park has been one of his major objectives and believes that the public response from both Maricopa County and Pinal County residents will be overwhelming.

**SPANISH-SPEAKING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR ADULT PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

Supervisor Wilcox presented the Spanish-speaking internship program proposal for the Adult Probation Department. She stated that the department has been diligent about keeping within budget and had not brought extraneous initiatives before the Board of Supervisors; however, she felt that this was an important, cost-saving program that should be brought forward.

Supervisor Wilcox explained that the idea for this program was first discussed with Adult Probation during a meeting a couple of years ago regarding the lack of Spanish-speaking interpreters and the high cost associated with interpreters. The objective of this program would be to provide 10 interns, students from

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Phoenix College, who would assist the Adult Probation Department by participating as "junior" probation officers. A qualification for inclusion to this program would be that interns must be bilingual and would be tested for fluency. The idea is based on the premise that if the department cannot adequately recruit Spanish-speaking officers, then they must be grown from within. The cost for the program would be minimal: 10 interns would receive \$10 per hour for a 20-hour week, plus mileage and training supplies for two semesters. Phoenix College would participate by supplying training rooms and paying the instructors' salaries. Supervisor Wilcox stated that this program could greatly enhance Adult Probation's ability to handle a large monolingual population.

Chairman Stapley questioned whether this initiative was being brought forth in this format because Adult Probation had already signed off on their budget.

Supervisor Wilcox responded negatively, and restated that the department did not bring any other initiatives forward, yet she felt strongly about the importance of this proposal and that it should be brought before the Board. She confirmed that the Adult Probation Department staff is in support of this proposal, and it would also help to alleviate a caseload problem should the State legislators require a cutback of probation officers. Supervisor Wilcox indicated that the annual cost for the program would be \$40,500 for 10 interns, eight of which would be assigned to Adult Probation and two trained for Juvenile Probation. Supervisor Wilcox described the potential long-term results as tremendous by training interns who would work within the Maricopa County probation system and reduce the cost of interpreters by a significant amount.

Chairman Stapley commented that this proposal appears to be a good, innovative idea and deserves additional review and consideration.

Supervisor Wilson asked what type of cost-savings this proposal would bring. Supervisor Wilcox explained that an inexperienced interpreter is paid nearly \$36,000. The objective of this plan would be to have "junior" probation interns train with senior probation officers and provide translation, then eventually carry a limited caseload by the end of their training, and eliminate the need for interpreters.

Supervisor Wilson expressed his support for programs with the potential of making money, such as this.

Chairman Stapley thanked Supervisor Wilcox for bringing the proposal forward.

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

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Don Stapley, Chairman of the  
Board

ATTEST:

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Fran McCarroll, Clerk of the Board